

MEASURE

WINTER 1964

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measure

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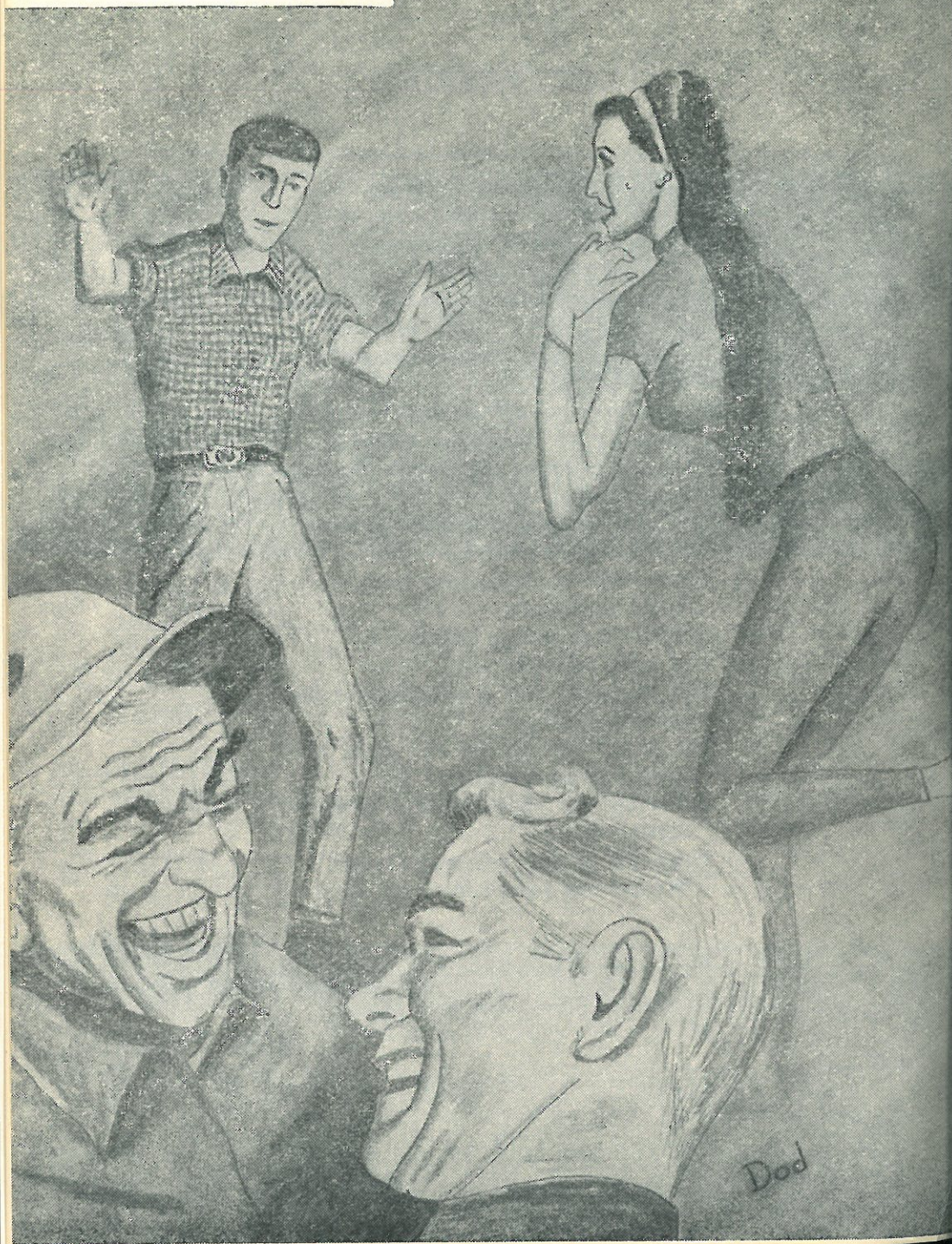
Dennis Darby

Seasons

Was there ever music so lovely
as the music of a star?
In the dark ethereal night they
play their symphonies.
From the midnight depths the vibrating
strand emanates in cold splendor,
In fiery swirling passion, and freed
from its prison,
Bursts forth to encircle the heavens in
rhapsody of crystalline sound,
Of volcanic throbs that scorch the very
fires of Hell.
And here, the seared leaf blown by
biting, bracing wind,
Gives voice to the approaching white
sound that drifts
Softly to the earth to blanket all
in still, majestic peace.
And the envoy bud gives visions of the
encircling fervor
That melts the ground and turns the
earth into an orchestra
Reflecting the vividness of a hundred
blazing violins.
Pulsating to that celestial concert
We live our years and die.

—Robert McHugh

BRIAR PATCH



In Indiana we call them "briars," maybe because these poor whites from Kentucky are stingy-thin, and the sharp angles of their bones jerk wildly when they move. I do not know what they call themselves. We may work beside them, but nobody wants to know them. They are worse than Negroes, because they are white. You can spot them easily. Their dirty clothes cover bodies bristling with blackheads. I did not know it, but that night I would be surrounded by them.

I had to go to a professional wrestling match held in our local baseball park. I needed a mailing list of donors for a charity drive, so I contacted the former secretary of the United Charities Association. He had moved out of town, but at nights he managed the ball park concession stand.

I walked through the gate at dusk. The playing field was laid out in a hollow between two hills. I looked down from the top of the stands and barely saw the crowd shuffling about in the bleacher seats. The only light came from above the wrestling ring, erected in front of home plate, surrounded by three circles of folding chairs already filled with briars.

A greasy-faced teenage counter girl informed me that the manager was over at the clubhouse. I slowly strolled over to

the dimly lighted clubhouse door. I met the manager there. Shaking my hand with bejeweled fingers, he gestured in the dusk with a lit cigarette.

"Hi, Tim, glad to see you tonight. Did you have any trouble at the gate?"

"No, I just mentioned your name."

"Good, that's good. Here, I have the mailing list for you. Let's go over to my office and you can copy it there."

"All right."

As we walked along the top of the stands, I admired his appearance. He was in his early twenties, just out of school, crew-cut, well dressed and walked like a springy bulldog. He unlocked a small door and ushered me into a tiny office.

"Tim, you can copy it here. Hell, I'm sorry I didn't have time to copy it, but you said you needed it tonight."

"Yeah, we have to get the letters off tomorrow. You know, the first contact."

"Oh yes. Well you copy it. I have to go back to the clubhouse and find the promoter. I'll be back before the match is over. We can go down and see a little of the action. By the way, some friends of mine are here too. I want you to meet them."

"Fine, I'm sure I can copy this list before the match is over, Sam."

Robert Blackwood, Jr.

"Good, I'll see you." He left quickly.

I sat in the room busily writing away, filling sheet after sheet with names and addresses of donors. As time passed, I heard shrill cries for blood slit the night air above the crowd's drone. Those crazy briars were really getting worked up over those phony wrestlers.

As I was finishing, Sam entered the office on the bounce.

"Ready to go?"

"Yeah, soon as I finish this page."

"Take your time. I want you to meet a couple of my best friends. They're down by the ring. Man, you should see those damn briars down there."

"I can hear them easy enough.

They're really enjoying the show."

"*They* always do. Here, just put those papers in my folder here. O.K., you have your copies?"

"Yeah."

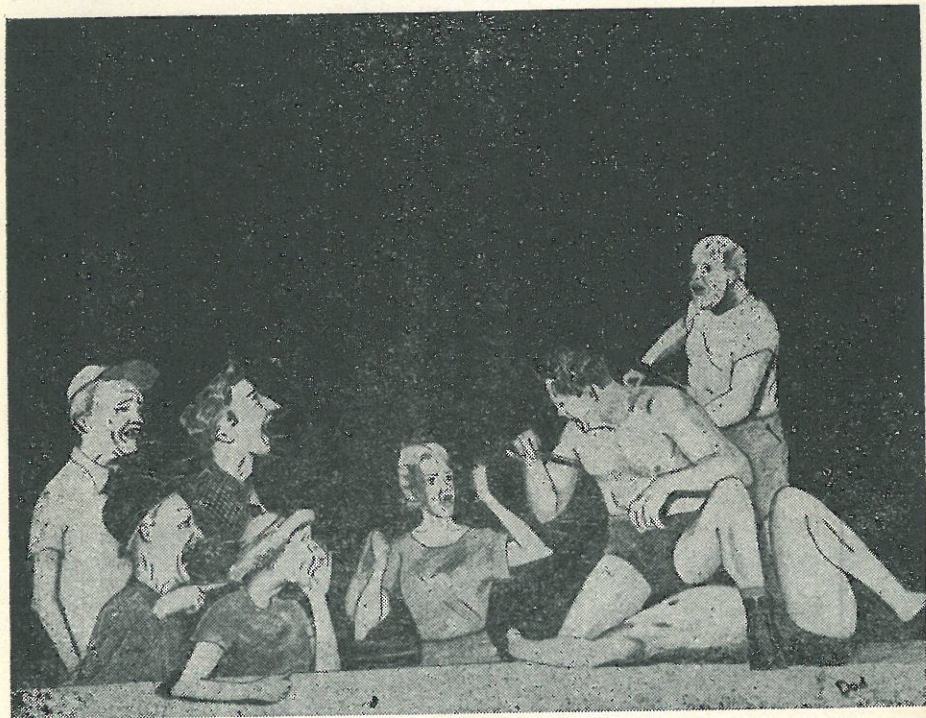
"Good, now let's go and meet my buddies."

We walked down from the clubhouse to the playing field. Two young men in sport coats, standing in back of the police patrolled ringside seats, walked over to us.

"Howie," Sam said as he slapped the back of a well-built fellow with narrow eyes shifting between rolls of fat, "I want you to meet Tim Uril. Tim, this is Howie Ostok."

"Glad to meet you, Howie," I said as he firmly grasped my hand.

"And this is Roger White,



Tim," Sam said as I shook hands with a short, sun burnt fellow with a twitching nose.

Sam grabbed both of them around the shoulders.

"You know, Tim, we're the three musketeers of Libertyville. We stuck together all through high school and I.U. Man, did we go. We sure got around, eh boys? Of course, *they* don't get around much any more since they got married."

"That's right," Howie grunted. "But I sure like to get away and see a good wrestling match."

We all snickered.

"They sure put on an act, don't they?" Sam propelled his friends around so that they were facing the ring. "Man, those briars eat it up. Hey, look at that old bitch."

A withered old grandmother had jumped from her seat and was slapping her palm on the canvas. When a policeman came up to restrain her, another brown-faced grandmother tried to hit one of the wrestlers with a bony fist. The wrestler, a swarthy bearded butterball, ducked her blow and with great indignation summoned the referee.

We laughed at the old fools.

Finally the police restored order. The wrestlers, wrapped in silken robes, left the ring with a police escort. Their gaudy recessional was mobbed by ragged briars straining their vocal chords to cheer or jeer. One undernourished boy in Japanese tennis shoes

was dancing around the bearded butterball, shouting threats.

Roger giggled, "They're getting their money's worth tonight."

We all smiled contemptuously, except Howie who was in deep conversation with a thin woman whose face dripped cosmetics.

"What's Howie got on the line?" I whispered to Sam.

"I think she wants to get a little lovin' from one of the wrestlers. Howie looks a little like the promoter. You know how these briar women go for these play-boy wrestlers."

I nodded and smirked at Howie as he returned.

"Well, Howie, you all fixed up for tonight, or are you going to introduce her to Buddy Sweet?" Sam chuckled.

"Hell, I don't know Buddy Sweet. But I'm going to see her tomorrow night at the county fair wrestling match."

I rolled my eyes appreciatively and said, "Well, Sam, now that Howie is fixed up for tomorrow night, what do you have in mind for tonight?"

"I don't know, what did you boys have in mind?"

"Why don't we go over to the North Side? It's a real briar patch, but they been twistin' over there nights," Roger suggested eagerly.

"Isn't it funny, Tim," Sam wryly commented, "that these old married men know where all the action is?"

"Old married men hell!" Howie exclaimed.

"Tell you what, it'll just take

me a little while to close up here. Why don't you take Tim over to the North Side and I'll meet you there?"

Howie cocked his head. "Can't do it, Sam, I'm driving my Sprite tonight. Of course, we could squeeze Tim in, if we *had* to."

"Oh no. He can go with me then." Sam caught Howie's arm, "I've never seen a looped briar twist."

"You will tonight," Howie said. "I'll see you."

"Yeah, we'll be right over," I said. "I have a thirst on tonight."

"Who doesn't?" Roger grinned.

"Well, see you fellows."

"See you, Sam, and you too, Tim," they said as they moved off.

"Come on," Sam said as we walked through the crowd of briars heading for the exit. We climbed the stone steps to the concession counter.

"Shirley, you lock up for me, will you?" Sam asked as he leaned on the counter.

"Sure, Sam, here's the cash box," Shirley said as she handed him a small metal box.

"Thanks a lot, Shirley." Sam tossed it over his shoulder as he hurried me back down the steps towards the outfield, which had been converted into a parking lot.

"Why the big rush, Sam?" I asked. "You *really* dry?"

"No, aah . . ."

We climbed into Sam's new white convertible.

"Tim, I have to make a little side trip before we go to the

North Side. You don't mind, do you?"

"No, it's all right by me so long as we get to the North Side. Those briars should be something to see."

"Yeah, yeah."

We talked business as Sam drove. Soon he turned into a driveway.

"I'll be right back, Tim. I'm sorry to make you wait."

"That's fine, I'm in no hurry, Sam."

Time passed slowly as I gazed at the luminous dial of the dashboard clock—ten, fifteen, twenty minutes and more. Then I heard a screen door screech open and saw Sam.

"I never see you any more, Sam," a woman called from inside the house. "You come back when you said. This town's dead without you around."

"Well you know me. I'll be around. See you later. Good night, Sue."

"Good night, Sam."

The door banged as Sam approached.

"Sorry, didn't mean to keep you waiting here, Tim."

"That's all right, Sam. Tell me though, you got something going there?"

Sam hit me in the side playfully and jerked the car into reverse.

"Tim, aah, when we get to the North Side, if the boys ask where we've been, we just had to make copies of these papers here, right?" Sam asked as he tapped my folder.

"Sure."

"I don't think they'll give us any trouble. They'll be too busy drinking and watching those damn briars."

So we drove into the worst section of town. The streets were filled with chuck holes. We jolted past groups of briars lounging under street lights. We heard their elongated vowels rising to the sky. Finally we pulled up at the North Side, a dirty frame building with two windows displaying neon BEER and LIQUOR signs.

Sam pulled over to the cracked cement curb. We slid out and carefully locked the car. Side by side we entered the North Side through a large rusty screen door and gazed about with bemused expressions. The clamor of the juke box was met with the clatter of dancing briars.

"There they are," Tim said as he motioned towards a table in the rear. We ambled over and sat down; the boys had their eyes on the dancers.

Howie turned, lifted his eyebrows, and asked, "What took you so long?"

"Oh, we had to copy some papers. Tim, here, needed some names and addresses for his mailing list. United Charities, you know. But we've had enough business for tonight, right, Tim?"

"You said it, Sam, let's get a good look at these briars."

We pushed our chairs back from the linoleum table top and watched the dancers. A smiling underage boy in a white jacket swung his angular hips against a

tall girl with stringy black hair that reached to the belt of her tight beach pants. An ugly slug-shaped man lurched across the floor with a wildly gyrating red head whose elbows pierced the cigarette haze. Each time a dime went into the slot, the bam bam bounce of the juke box racked the rotten wood floor. The thud of the dancers seemed like one massive heart beat as the beer hit us.

"Man, look at that one," we said again and again as we nudged one another and nodded towards one couple or another.

"Be back in a minute," I said. I got up to find the jon.

"Don't take any half-hour this time. It's your turn to buy a round," Howie growled.

"Here, Tim, I'll go with you," Sam said through the fog of too many beers.

As we stepped away from the table, Sam threw his arm around my shoulder. When he did this, he stumbled against a chair, and interrupted a briar's conversation with his girl. The briar looked up angrily from a table top covered with spilt beer and cigarette butts.

"It's all right, pal," I said. "My friend's just getting his second wind."

"Just keep him away from me," the briar drawled as he rubbed his hands on his tight, greasy blue jeans. He glowered at me as we passed his table.

I moved on towards what I

hoped was the jon, supporting Sam with one arm.

"You sure take good care of me, Tim. Hell, that bastard Howie's as suspicious as hell. I'm glad you didn't say anything. That was Howie's wife I was talking to in the house, you know."

"Yeah, I thought there was something, Sam."

"There was nothing to it, but . . ."

"Forget it, Sam."

"That's right, Tim, old buddy, just forget it."

We came back from the jon and

dropped into our chairs, watching the dancers through half closed eyes. The dancers raised scrawny bare arms to the smoke stained ceiling. A tall briar with a white cowboy hat jumped from his table, dragging a woman with each horny hand. The other two briars at his table glared at him and clutched their beer bottles fiercely.

As we drank into the early hours of the morning, we glared at them dancing and fighting over their women. We couldn't stop laughing at those crazy briars.

Anguish

Past empty rooms filled with
dusty silence
down endless black roads leading into still,
quiet woods.
By dirty puddles drying slowly
on quiet cloud-filled days
when cats paw wet garbage and water
drips
from rusted gutters
onto the hushed and crusted pavement.
Through an eternity of sandy deserts
under hot suns,
remote,
ceaseless.
Past lighted windows and playing children
into a grey and choking void
of silence.

—Robert McHugh

IAN FLEMING'S



by FRANK JOZAITES

*"Have you ever been married?"
she asked.*

*"No," James Bond answered,
"but I've had affairs."*

And so goes the adventure-filled, girl-laden, and dangerously thrilling life of British Secret Service agent 007 (the double-O means that he is one of the three men in the Service licensed to kill). The Service is the British counterpart of our C.I.A.—except that they are older and prouder.

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But what is the good of leading such an adventurous life if there is no one with whom to share the anxieties, someone to confide in? Well, this James Bond has—a different one in each episode at that. No matter how much danger surrounds him, or how large the enemy organization is that he is currently fighting, be it Russian assassins, American gangsters, or Chinese Negro lunatics, Jimmy-boy finds a soft, smooth shoulder upon which to lay his scarred brow, and an opulent bosom upon which to rest his weary trigger finger.

Of course, there's always Bond's "father confessor" and boss, the head of the double-O section, an admiral known only as "M" from whom Bond has no secrets, except, perhaps—and only perhaps—full details concerning his extra-curricular activities designed to relieve the tensions of his busy and hazardous days.

Ian Fleming's scar-faced chain smoker has captured the imagination and pocketbook of the American as well as the English reading public. Among his avid readers Fleming can point to the members of both the British and American Secret Service.

Described as the intellectual's Mickey Spillane, Ian Fleming uses the same tricks in holding a reader's interest as does Mike Hammer's creator. The loose thread, the hint of doubt, the promise of something better in the next thrill-packed chapter.

Bond is not the English Mike Hammer, however, for where

Hammer is a crude, violent, beer-drinking brawler, Bond is a suave, daring, sensitive, dry martini-drinking sophisticate; where Spillane is vile, repulsive and obscene, Fleming is smooth, realistic but digestible and believable. The love scenes are tantalizing but tasteful.

Essential ingredients for a James Bond Thriller are the high-stakes gambling scene, the bizarre torture scene, the battle ship grey Bentley (the 1930 4½-litre with the Amherst-Villiers supercharger), and the Blades Club. His cigarettes with their three distinctive gold rings (a considerable security risk), the slim .25 Beretta, steel toe caps for his shoes, and, of course, the meal-ordering scene. One memorable meal, in *Moonraker*, takes 6½ pages for Bond to order and eat.

Let us not forget the girls! There is always the desirable Miss Money Penny, M's all-powerful private secretary. The *must*, of course, is the beautiful girl friend of the master criminal whom Bond is fighting, who falls in love with the irresistible secret agent and helps him by turning traitor. Later, she turns to him and whispers softly in his ear, "Now."

One of Bond's greatest adversaries was SMERSH (short for *Smiert Spionam*, "Death to Spies") the murder Apparatus of the High Praesidium. For the sake of easing the tension in international relations which SMERSH created, Fleming decided that the deadly agency had to be eliminated. SMERSH had been try-

ing to bury 007 for years. One Soviet agent sent to lure Bond to his doom, in *From Russia With Love*, was a voluptuous siren named Tatiana Romanova who looked like Greta Garbo. Though her "body belonged to the state," Boudoirsman Bond swiftly restored it to private enterprise.

Actually it would be a gross injustice to say that the James Bond thrillers are over-run with sex; they are not "dirty" books. It's just that one cannot help but get the feeling that the next affair is just around the corner. Fleming made an attempt, in *Goldfinger*, to rationalize Bond's prolificness. After sharing the lower bunk on a sleeper car from Miami to New York, Bond thought over the short but fast-moving affair: "*It hadn't been love, but a quotation had come into Bond's mind as his taxi moved out of Pennsylvania station: 'Some love is fire, some love is rust, but the finest, cleanest love is lust.' Neither had had regrets. Had they committed a sin? If so, which one? A sin against chastity? Bond smiled to himself. There was a quotation for that too, and from a saint—Saint Augustine: 'Oh Lord, give me Chastity. But don't give it yet!' "*

One can obtain a liberal education in gracious living from Fleming. The finer points of gambling and drinking are expounded in his books, and one learns how to order the best foods in the best restaurants of the world.

Fleming, because of his fluency

in French, German, and Russian, was manager of the Moscow bureau of Reuters News Agency. When the war broke out, he joined the British Naval Intelligence and was assistant to its director. Many of his readers believe that he is actually chronicling his own adventures in the Bond novels. Fleming himself helps this myth along with dust jacket pictures of himself menacingly holding a gun. Nothing could be further from the truth, however, for Fleming is in reality the opposite of his creation. Bond is "cruel," and Fleming is very gentle. Bond is a killer, and Fleming couldn't kill the bush rats in his summer house because "they couldn't help it that they were bush rats." He went into deep depression when he finally had to have them exterminated.

He usually writes four hours a day and settles for about 2000 first-draft words per day. He once said, "I have a rule of never looking back. Otherwise I'd wonder, 'How could I write such piffle?'"

Fleming fans will admit that his novels have very little literary merit except for his attention-holding descriptive passages. His plots are thin and improbable, ridiculous might be a better word for it. Fleming admits that he writes for money, appealing to all of the senses except the aesthetic. Though the books may be "piffle," millions of people have become James Bond fans.

All of the thrillers are written with an air of authenticity. Flem-

ing's writing is fast-moving, clean, and uncomplicated without being bare. In Spillane, for example, the reader can speculate with 99% accuracy on the next turn of the story. One knows that there will be three seduction scenes in any Mike Hammer novel, one at the beginning, one in the middle, and one near the end. Such is not the case with Fleming to any great degree. While speeding through the novels, his fans know full well that James Bond will be saved from his seemingly impossible situation—but how? How? Fleming's feeling for suspense leads the reader's eyes word by word, page by page, chapter by chapter, to the conclusion, where, though the solution may be ridiculous, Fleming's cleverness and skill is able to make the unbelievable believable.

James Bond has become a very real character outside of fiction. Bartenders are suspicious of anyone ordering dry martinis with a twist of lemon on the side. Rookie cops give a knowing wink to any

man who has a scar on the left side of his face. Airline stewardesses flirt with the London-bound passenger who carries a brown, stitched, leather attache case.

While readers wait excitedly for another film based on his novels (*Dr. No* was first, *From Russia With Love* the most recent), Fleming swims in the Caribbean, dreaming up the next novel. Will James Bond outwit the Communist plot to steal the London Bridge and the Washington Monument and hold them until a ransom of half the bullion reserves of the United States and Great Britain is paid? Will he be able to defeat the insidious Boris Snideface, and prevent this fiend from blowing up Nassau Harbor? Will he be able to save the ravishingly beautiful Ramona Luverly from the burning yacht of the criminal mastermind, Koastan Gnustraw? Will his next adventure sell yet another million copies to the Walter Mittys of this world?



Dod

The

Alligator

by

James

Muth

"Do you think it's an alligator or a crocodile?" asked Anxious Helter.

"It really doesn't matter, Anx, because he's dead and he's going to stay that way," replied Ben.

"But Ben, we've got to tell someone we've killed this thing. I mean you just don't leave something like this laying around. There's probably a bounty on some of these things. Think there's

a bounty on crocs? I think so, right?"

"It don't concern us anymore. It's dead and it belongs to the bugs. Let's go."

Anx didn't want to leave their kill, but he followed Ben anyway. Ben wasn't saying anything and he wasn't looking at the mauled corpse, but Anx couldn't keep his eyes off of it. There was blood all around and the animal's dull gray skin was now shining red. Its scales were bent and torn; its legs twisted and broken; its breast was dripping blood from a bullet hole. There were flies all around and beetles beginning to dig and birds were flying overhead with

their tiny tongues hanging and pointing to a meal.

The two boys walked through the ferns and rotted logs and leaves. Their heads were bowed: Ben's with relief, Anx's with anxiety.

"Ben, we could collect a fine bounty. Those critters must eat all the fish or something. They're awful ugly. The state must pay something for them. Plenty, I'll bet."

"I'm not sure, Anx. Just don't get too upset and I'll look into it. But don't tell anyone about the kill. They'll just come around and poach us right out of some money. People get kind of rotten about that."

"You're right, Ben. I won't say anything. But they're going to ask me about my gun. What should I tell 'em then?"

"Tell 'em you killed a bat or something. Tell 'em anything, I don't care. But I don't want to hear anyone else talking about this kill, that's all."

"Ben, I won't say a word about it. Now that's a promise. I really promise."

"Okay. Now let's clean the gun so maybe they won't ask you about anything. No more shooting."

They sat down together on a log. Anx took a ramrod and some patches from his knapsack and began to clean the bore. Ben worked on the bolt. No one said anything, but they were both thinking. Anx tightened his face to keep from laughing out of pure

joy. What a day for him. What a day for the alligator or whatever it was. What a day it would be tomorrow when they have bounty. What a day. Ben was just wondering about the alligator. It was an alligator he killed; he knew that, but he didn't want to tell Anx because that would give something definite for him to build a story on. Anx was like that. You can't kill alligators around here, and you can't kill anything the way he killed that one. But Anx didn't care; he was a little funny about killing anyway.

Anx couldn't hold himself back anymore. Laughing a little, "If someone did happen to stumble on our kill, they'd sure report it to Mister Conchee, wouldn't they? Maybe we'd better cover it with something. Or maybe I should stay and watch that no one takes it until you find out about it?"

"Anx, will you please not talk about it anymore. We'll come back, okay? Please don't say anything else."

"Come on, Ben, let me stay. Please."

"Look, Anxious, will ya shut your mouth. Shut it, shut it!"

"Oh, okay. But gosh, Ben . . ."

"Damn you, shut up."

Anx didn't talk anymore about it. But he sure wanted to. He couldn't talk to anyone about it. What fun would it be? Who'll know what they've done? But what good would it do if he did talk? They wouldn't call it a pub-

lic kill or anything like they do in Harlantown when they find carcasses that aren't brought in after the kill. Old Conchee would fix it so he could collect the bounty. That wasn't the way the law was, but that was the way Conchee was.

He felt that Ben would sure find out what they had killed and find out what Conchee owed them. But what if Ben wouldn't share the money? He's the one that did the killing. It was his work.

"Hey, Ben, will you share the money with me? It was my gun and my knife that did the killing; you only used them, that's all. Will you share the bounty? Will you?"

"I'll share it. I'll share it. I'll share anything if you would just let the whole thing alone and shut your mouth."

Anx hoped that Ben wasn't really angry about his talking about the kill so much. But Ben was red again and mad at Anx. Anx couldn't think of a good reason why. He never could figure out Ben. It wasn't that he was nosy; he was just looking out for himself. They'd heard too much about the bounty cheaters and the poachers. But old Ben wasn't one of the cheaters; he was a good hunter, a real fine killer. Good old Ben.

The gun was cleaned and everything ready to go. Ben was looking slow. Anx could always tell when old Ben wasn't going to hurry into anything. He wanted

to ask Ben if he was going to follow that slow look, that awful slow look that was on his face or if he was going to hurry and find out from Mister Conchee. But Ben didn't like to be looked into, even though Anx didn't have to look into anything to tell about that look on Ben's face. He didn't ask Ben, but he knew the answer soon enough. The boys walked slowly out of the swamp.

"We'd better dig up Conchee right now, Ben. That carcass isn't going to stay there this time of day. We just can't wait; everybody's out there eating it."

"I'll do it myself. You go home and don't tell anyone about it. I'll have to wait around because Conchee's not around here this time of day."

"Sure he is, Ben. He's always down by the boathouse when the sun comes down. Let's both go and ask him. Come on."

"Anx, will you please let me do it my way? Please?" Ben was getting red again, so Anx wasn't going to argue.

"Oh, okay. But I'll see you by the creek tomorrow morning. Don't forget anything, Ben, about Mister Conchee? Please don't forget?"

"I won't."

Ben and Anxious parted. They lived on opposite sides of the swamp. Anxious took the path around the north side and Ben waded across the creek and went down the south trail. Anx was thinking about what there was to buy in town or down by the

boathouse with his share of the bounty. That damn Conchee. He'll stick half the bounty in his own pocket. But still, five or six dollars in town or by the boat-house goes a long way. Boy, what a day. "Good old Ben. He's real fine."

Ben hitched a ride with old Mister Hattenstein, an immigrant, who farmed a little plot of dried-up government swamp and tried like the devil to make enough converts to set up some kind of a temple. Ben tried to keep the old man from talking about religion because he didn't like the old man's ideas. But nothing could really stop him; he really wanted to talk about religion, so he did.

"Honestly, Benjamin . . ."

"My name's Ben."

"Oh, Ben, what you need is the Lord of the heaven to look down on you, and then when he does, for you to take him to yourself. He knows what you are, Ben. He know's what we all are. But it doesn't matter to Him at all. He loves everyone, but when He tries to do something, you just spit and cuss."

"That's a lotta . . ."

"Don't say anything, Ben. Please? You don't know, you just don't know. This place is evil just like the swamp. But God knows that His people aren't like the animals in there. But still He can't reckon with the people around here. This place is really for God, Benjamin, but no one wants to clean up for Him."

Ben didn't want to say any-

thing. He'd heard the same thing before but in a different place. Old Hattenstein didn't know anything except the bad; he'd been in all the wrong places. Germany was a place like this and the old man was there. And now he's here and there isn't anything too much good about this place.

"Thanks, Mister Hattenstein, I have to go. I just remembered I promised my brother a bug or something to play with from the swamp."

"Sure, Ben. Say hello to your granddad."

"I will."

Sam watched the old man go away in his old buckboard that still had a star of David on the back from four years ago when the old man went preaching. His white hair was flapping in the breeze. It was all mixed up with his white beard and the skullcap that was placed on his head like a tree. The old buckboard went out of sight, probably going past Ben's house now. But Ben went into the swamp.

His bare feet didn't slip into the crusty mire near the edge of the road, but when he was near the barbed wire fence which was supposed to keep the children out of the swamp, the mud was up to his knees. Ben kept thinking about the alligator and what he did. He made a clean shot of it. Right into the chest if you count the angle. That stopped him. Then he said to Anx, "I'm going to trophy it like old Beecher's got in the back of the prayer house."

Anx told him that they didn't trophy an alligator or a crocodile like a deer, and that Beecher had a deer in the prayer house and not a crocodile or an alligator. He said he didn't care and borrowed Anx's Bowie knife. He bent down and knelt next to the alligator's front leg almost like he was genuflecting. He saw flies crowding around the hole in the chest and that blood was running out. He grabbed the knife and ripped into the hard flesh and tore a ragged gash. He pulled the knife down underneath the head and the bottom of the neck. He had a hard time because the alligator's shoulders were part of the neck and the muscles were stiff and hard to cut. He cut around, but the head was still on. Finally, he had to hack at the gash and grab at the head and twist with all his might. When he pulled on it, blood shot up in little spurts from the bullet hole. Anx burst into laughter at this.

The head finally came off and Ben laughed with Anx. Then he pointed to where the head had been and told Anx how ugly it was and how it should be killed separately. He took the knife and first jabbed at where the head was. But the stuff was shiny and covered with a tight, slippery coating of something. He had to jab harder and harder. Anx laughed; he was turning blue with laughter. Ben started to laugh as he again ripped at the tough, gray skin. But he had to jam the knife in with all his weight. Blood

came out all over. He held the knife like a churning rod, jamming it into the bloody skin. Anx laughed hard, so Ben began to sing his old grandmother's churning song: "Pile on, Oh, Pile on. There's goin' to be a meetin'. But the butter's all been eaten'. If you can't drive the rod and you can't drain the curd, then you ain't no woman and you're goin' to get a beaten'." After that, Ben laughed as hard as Anx. Anx was trying to say through his laughter, "What a day, Ben; what a day!" Then Ben started to look around at all the flies and beetles already there and all the stuff starting to ooze and the blood flowing into a puddle with the tadpoles swimming crazily to get out of the way. He felt sick, but Anx was still laughing.

While he was thinking, the mud went up to his knees; he'd never been in that far before and his grandfather would want to know how he got in that deep. He got out of the big puddle and then he thought about burying the dead animal. He could dig up the soft muck in the puddle and put him there and no one would know. People wouldn't care about the blood; there was always red water and mud all over the swamp. But Anx would want to know what happened to the carcass. Ben thought that he could tell him the bounty crooks took it; he would be mad, but he wouldn't be mad at Ben.

He made his way through the long, hanging vines that twisted

a net through the whole swamp; he kicked his way through clumps of fern and finally recognized the place. A few more yards.

Then he saw Anx. He was standing near the alligator's head. He was just standing there. Ben stopped and his face grew red; his teeth rubbed together. Why's he here; what the hell's he doing here? He's looking at it like it's something great. Why is he here? Why? His damn bounty and old Conchee.

"Benjy, Ben!" Anxious had seen him. "Come on over. I knew you'd be here."

Ben went toward Anx, his face still red as the blood that covered the place.

"Come on, Ben."

Ben saw Anx's wide grin. Anx wasn't at all surprised to see Ben there. That idiot. That ignorant animal, Ben thought.

"Ben, lookit how all these things want some of our kill. That's okay as long as no big things like people want their share. We won't let them have any, will we, Ben?"

Anx, Anx. Ben ran toward him and slapped him hard on the face and punched him in the stomach. Anx fell down crying and Ben was crying with red eyes.

"I didn't tell anyone, Ben, honest. Lookit those bugs eatin' up pure money. Let's get 'em, Ben, come on."

Ben looked at Anx through his wet eyes. His fists were clenched

and his knees were twitching. He stared, dropping his mouth a little. Then Anx began to smile and Ben began to cry harder and harder. His mouth was filled with the stuff from his throat and nose. He couldn't breathe too well.

He looked at the alligator and at Anx, who didn't look too different from the dead thing when he was all crumpled up on the ground and muddy. There was nothing to do. Everything moved around like he was on a swing. Nothing wanted to stay in the same place. Everything wanted to go.

Ben kicked the corpse into a puddle, and it sank in the mud with an explosion of blood and muddy water and crazy tadpoles. There were bubbles and then stillness on the puddle except for beetles and maggots trying to get away from the water. Ben covered the puddle with wet leaves and sticks and kicked mud on the covering.

Anx stared at the covered puddle; he wasn't laughing; he wasn't crying or anything. Just looking at leaves and sticks and some of the red mud.

Ben turned and ran toward the road; he ran fast and straight, but stumbling over everything. Anx watched him go, and then he followed calling. He caught up and the two boys walked a while and parted at the road.

Château Réve

*I've seen the sea,
and walked the sand,
and stood alone and cried;
I've watched the dreams
of tender youth
wash out upon the tide:
Remember, dear,
when we were young,
we built a castle grand—
We were so proud
of our handiwork,
though it was only sand.
We laughed and played
and made believe
in a world of childish glee,
But our revels
made us unaware
of the rising, angry sea.
The first wave
only kissed a wall,
and we mocked our enemy;
But our mocking mirth
soon ended when
our castle fell in the sea.
Remember
how we stood alone
and wept so bitterly?
And no one then
could tell us why
our castle fell in the sea.
It's many years
that now have passed,
and things are clear to me:
A castle
that is made of sand
is helpless by the sea.*

by John L. Madden

An

Angel

Falls

by Robert McHugh

He sat at the desk while the little breezes from the ancient window licked at his smooth face. The fading sun's beams caressed his hair, selecting the grains of red and gold. Warmth and light bathed his unblemished skin and virgin facial hairs. His vacant eyes did not betray the thought taking place behind.

A rabbit darted across the lawn and disappeared behind the fifth station while a crow desecrated Saint Thomas and a spider laced the Virgin. He neither saw nor

heard anything until the bells rang.

Quickly he broke his secret reverie, buttoned his shirt and rushed for the stairs. The old stairs, grown familiar through much use, led to the huge dormitory room. A few boys were hurrying with trousers—a couple with robes. Noiselessly he crossed the room and walked without emotion down a slate stairway.

He was early. A few of the older men were in the rear pews fumbling with their beads, a few boys knelt board-upright in front.

He knelt next to them but found a stained window better prayer. There stands John the Baptist, holy and straight. Who kneels so piously before him to receive the water? Where is Salome? He thought of Salome's soft body and sensuous eyes and then he thought of sin and began to pray.

Christ was walking with Mary Magdalen. Mary smiled and beckoned Him to go and sit by a rivulet. Christ was clothed in red and white robes—all flowing and clean—He looked rather stern. Mary made a fool of herself. *Hail Mary, full of grace . . .*

"The Lord, my son, knows all our thoughts and calls each unto Himself. Answer His call and try daily to keep His Commandments. For your penance say . . ."

Urine danced on the surface of the water. The sun from the frosted window made a golden arc to the shimmering water. This isn't dirty, he thought, and then he thought of the stained windows with their yellow haloes. He thought of saintly Father Rathe, too, and wondered if he ever urinated.

'The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away,' Indeed, we may spend many profitable hours meditating on such a seemingly simple statement. Whole theologies have been written on this very topic . . ." The mouth of the instructor moved up and down, up and down. What was he saying; what does he mean? It's raining outside, but God is in me. Lord,

help me to know You; to understand!

He looked at the yellow flower, small and frail by the asphalt. He bent to pick it up, but he had to hurry to keep up with his group. "I wonder if it is correct to deny people in error equal rights. I mean, can we tolerate non-truth? What do you think?" He didn't answer. He didn't feel intelligent, nor did he feel very holy.

"Domine non sum dignus . . ." Would they notice that he wasn't going to Communion? *My Lord and my God.*

Afraid to take too large a portion because the tray had to go all the way down the table, he took one piece and all remained silent while a priest read to them. "Christ is actually present in the Eucharist. We can understand this mystery if we . . ."

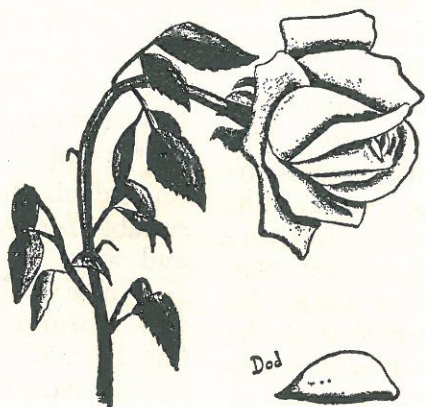
The bell woke him quickly. He smelled his shirt to see if it was suitable for wear, then he dressed and went to comb his hair. His fine nose looked thin and white this morning—he looked ascetic like Francis' statue. He punched himself hard in the stomach causing his thin body to quiver as the muscles accepted the shock. He was satisfied.

The shower room with the curtains on every stall and the smell of strong soap. The medal around his neck said "Made in Italy" and was cheap. He looked at the red curtains that screened his nakedness and listened to the sound of the tinkling water. The Seminari-

ans said "good Lord" and "heck"
and tried not to get angry.

"My son, you musn't get dis-
couraged. You are young yet and
next year you will be getting your

robe. Wait several more months."
Wait several more months, wait
several more years, wait several
more lifetimes. By then the pale
yellow flower will be dead.



"Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!" said the head. For a moment or two the forest and all the other dimly appreciated places echoed with the parody of laughter. "You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are?"

Lord of the Flies
by William Golding

Despair

Night is coming, bleakness is near.
My heart pounding, I see things
A mortal does not dare reveal
To others.
The flies swarm, eat, gnaw.
The stench overwhelms;
It reeks with hideous venom.
My eyes sear, burn.
I shiver for lonely reasons;
My soul changes with their rhythmic beat.
Breasts once caressed,
Sag, untouched.
Now glistening thighs hang
Relaxed, useless.
My orbit complete;
The sphere perishes.

by Terry F. Sroka

The Many *by*

John

McEvilley, Jr.

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All of the customers sitting at the semi-circled counter in the Downtown Hamburger Emporium pretended not to notice when I walked in. But they did. Two cheaply dressed, over-rouged old women, probably from the bus terminal across the street, were the first to see me. From their stools by the front entrance, they stared at me as I came in, then glanced at the other patrons to see if their indiscretion had been detected. A fatigued man in a dark suit, probably a salesman, bent over the counter, chain smoking and sipping coffee. He shifted his eyes over the cup to glimpse at me. Others noticed me, too. The two truckers, the thin cabbie, the tired and hard-looking girl with the sullen smirk on her face, the withered old janitor from the Masonic lodge around the corner, the peroxide-blond waitress—all of them feigned unawareness, but all of them casually tilted or raised their heads, arched eyebrows, strained and squinted just to get a look at me. An old man even buried his face in the palms of his hands, then separated two fingers and peeked through. And a husky bus driver, condescending to set a tacit example, looked right at me, and

then away. He shrugged his shoulders disinterestedly as if to say, "What's the big deal? He's just another customer, just another guy, so what's the big deal?" But he looked again.

Well, surprise! The mysterious "Me" is Gerald Treherne and the reason all those people were looking up from their coffee and crummy hamburgers at three o'clock in the morning was that I walked in like a spastic. Actually, I didn't want to. I did it because my friends wanted me to. You see, we had been hitting all the nightclubs in downtown Cincinnati, but they close down at 2:30. We were all a little drunk, even the girls, and everyone was still awake—except me. I was drunker than the others and had a small headache. That's one reason I didn't want to do the spastic act. I just wanted to have a few more drinks and sit around quietly, listening to some mood music. So I suggested that we go to someone's house for a few nightcaps. But the rest of them said no. They wanted to do something exciting. Maybe I gave in because I was drunk, I don't know. But after the usual childish bickering, I said what the hell, okay, I'd do it. So the majority won. You see, I run around with a pretty wild crowd, sort of an adolescent cafe society, and—it's hard to explain—but they're sort of warped. They're not really bad or anything; they're just idiots. It's hard to understand if you don't know these people, I mean, how they got this

way. A lot of the guys at Winthrop Prep who aren't in our crowd think we're a bunch of asses. Lately, I'm beginning to see their point. Besides that, it's partly my brother Bobby's fault. He was a wild screwball and always did crazy things like this, and though he's two years older than I, everyone in my crowd knows about him. He used to dress up like a hick and go to Holy Roller meetings. When he was a senior at Winthrop, he went and sat on a department store Santa Claus's knee, pretending to be mentally retarded, and pulled his beard off. And there was the time he and his friends staged a fake mob killing on a corner downtown. They had an old black limousine, toy machine guns, and everything. He also used to dance with department store manikins. He was like that. Crazy. But he never intended any harm and everyone liked him and thought he was funny. A year ago he quit college and entered a Jesuit seminary. Now I suppose everyone expects me to carry on the family tradition. Of course, some of him had rubbed off on me and I had done the spastic bit before, but it gets disgusting after a while.

So there I was. I took almost a full minute to reach a stool at the end of the counter, in the back of the cafe where the booths began. As I walked along, my face muscles twitching, hands shaking spasmodically, back stiff and my left leg dragging to hamper my gait, I tried not to look at the rest of the group, who had

come in a minute before me. They were sitting in the first booth behind my stool and I could hear them giggling already. I knew I wouldn't laugh, though. I just wasn't in the mood now. But if I looked at them, they'd crack up. Then it would be all over. Some observant customer might notice that in the booth were three girls and two boys and that the three girls and two boys were all concentrating on me. It wouldn't take too much intelligence. Besides, they were holding my sport coat, which I had given them outside.

When I perched myself on the seat, I began to fold my hands on the counter, but almost automatically covered the right hand with my left, pretending it was knotted and I didn't want anyone to see it. A few of the audience saw this. They must have felt sorry for me. I looked so helpless and fragile in nothing but a wrinkled white shirt and loose black trousers, so pathetic, shivering alone there and staring up at the waitress with my sad brown eyes.

"What would you like, sir," she asked in a stilted, uncomfortably polite tone. She was forsaking her routine indifference and the usual, "Uh-huh, what'll it be?" Her name tag said "Corrie." She was a tired-looking hick, or hickess, who always had the night shift at the DHE. I was surprised she didn't recognize me. I guess she was convinced.

I didn't answer at first, but then stuttered in a pained voice,

"Uhhh, cu- cub a co- uhhh, cov-vee." My face muscles began twitching again.

"Yessir," she answered politely again, anxious to get away. "Would you care for cream and sugar, sir?"

I nodded a trembling affirmative.

Then I heard the giggling behind me. Tonight, I just wasn't in a "fun mood," as the crowd calls it; I was tired and irritated. Those asses, I thought. If they were even half-way intelligent, I wouldn't mind it; the least they could do was be quiet and appreciate a good act. I take one thing back. One of them, Billy Parker, is intelligent, but sometimes he's an ass. He was really the one who put me up to this. His fatal flaw is that he thinks my brother Bobby is God. He'd never come right out and say it, but anyone with half a mind could tell. Whenever I brought him home, the first thing he'd ask was if Bobby was around. Then he'd spend the whole time there talking to him. As we would leave, he'd always say something like: "Hey, listen, Rob, we'll have to get drunk together sometime, you hear?" (All Bobby's friends called him Rob, so naturally Billy constantly referred to him as Rob.) He even dressed like Bobby sometimes. And if that isn't bad enough, he had adopted some of Bobby's habits.—Like Bobby always used to stroke his forehead with his little finger, well, so does Billy. Other than that, though, Billy is an okay guy. He's pretty

intelligent and sort of handsome in a rough way. I mean he looks somewhat like a hood, except for his hair, which, I forgot to mention, he combs like Bobby—kind of a short continental. But the rest of them are idiots, especially my date, Gail Fahrringdale, who was laughing the loudest. She is damn good looking, though. Unfortunately, she tries to compensate for her idiocy by acting like the undiscovered flower of the—Jet-Set. She's always giving her idiot opinions about everything and making these stupid peremptory remarks: "Well, I *think* . . . etc." Think-Ha. (Bobby always took out idiots, too). As for the other gigglers: there was good old Susie, Billy's date, an almost-fat red head who constantly chewed gum and smacked her lips—a real zero, although she was attractive in a sexy kind of way. In fact, she was sort of cheap, sort of a slut. She wasn't really in our crowd. Billy just thinks it's funny as hell to bring cheap broads (I couldn't call her a girl) into good—well, allegedly good—company; probably because Bobby did it a few times. As for Tom D'Arcy, Billy's right hand man, who everyone calls Tom-Tom . . . well, he's just an idiot. And Tom-Tom's date, Margaret Herschel, is an anemic little blond who always looks like she's smelling something bad. She had been going with Tom-Tom for six years, since the seventh grade, though it's impossible to say why. I doubt if they had ever spoken more than two words to

each other. They just went out, usually doubling with Billy. All my friends call me Ger, or Gerry, but not Margaret. She always calls me Gerard (I called her Witch, by the way); and whenever I say anything half-way funny, she never laughs. She puckers her thin lips and goes: "Ooooooooooooh," like I've made a terribly risqué remark. Other than "Hello, Gerard; good-bye, Gerard," she never speaks to me. Just goes, "Ooooooooooooh." I could hear her now.

I wondered what to do while waiting for my coffee. The DHE has the slowest service in town and I was starting to feel awkward, even a little afraid. Before, when I had done this, it had been on the streets where I could run if any trouble arose. But now, inside, I was trapped. And this weary salesman, smoking cigarette after cigarette, kept staring at me. Some other people were staring, too, but they were falling for the act. The salesman seemed unconvinced. He couldn't be sure though, so I decided to convince him. After all, it's not hard to imagine what a real spastic thinks and feels—except maybe for Gail and the other idiots. I decided to really put myself in character. I mean, if I didn't believe in the act, who would?

Still, my feelings about this whole damn thing were mixed. Like I said, lately I get a little disgusted with this act. It never bothered me before, but now it seems sort of dirty, especially when I do it for those idiots be-

hind me. Well, what the hell, I'm trapped now, I thought. So I decided to make it great, like Emmett Kelly or Jackie Gleason's Poor Soul, but with a happy ending. Were Gleason's endings happy? I couldn't remember, but I wanted mine to be. Then I realized I couldn't make a happy ending if I wanted to. I don't know how. It was a stupid thought, anyway.

So I sat, apparently lost in my own world, drawn into myself, finding succor in my simple thoughts and dreams, and seeing beyond those who surrounded me, and who by now were gawking unabashedly. The act was going good.

God, I needed a cigarette, but that wouldn't look right. The party of five was still giggling, making me nervous. Damn them, I thought, I'm going to give them an act they'll never forget. It was another stupid and ludicrous thought, but I meant it. Maybe the bourbon was starting to get me, I don't know. It was getting hot inside, too.

What does a real spastic feel? He probably knows what people think when they see him, though I doubt if he cares after a while. They mean well, he probably knows that; they just don't understand. I imagine he's used to those simple, awe-stricken stares, like the ones I was getting from the idiot customers in the DHE, and the whispers—hushed, grave, and never intended to offend, but sometimes too loud. And even,

sometimes, the giggles, the smothered laughter, that's cruel. Once, when I did this bit with Billy Parker in a shopping center parking lot, I heard the sharp peal of previously contained laughter, about fifty feet behind me, suddenly released by someone passing by. It made me sort of sick and I haven't felt like acting this bit since. I almost thought I was a spastic then. Yeah, I guess that's the real reason. Maybe I'm just going soft, but lately callous people—even ordinary people—have kind of disgusted me. Especially the idiots I hang around with. Like this one afternoon we were all riding around in Tom-Tom's convertible. I had this big butter-scotch sundae and it was melting. So we drove past these garbage men and I splattered it all over one of them. Right away I felt sorry I had done it, but the rest of them laughed for about five minutes. Then they wanted to do it again. I mean, it never occurred to them that the guy's pride might of been hurt or that I messed up his clothes. To them he was just some nameless object—a nothing. You see, I used to be a reflection of my brother Bobby—not exactly, but partially—you know, anything for laughs, anything for the crowd. I did it partly because I was expected to, partly because it was an easy way to make friends, and partly because I really did enjoy it. I guess I'm jaded now. But my friends still enjoy it all. They're still kind of warped and I imagine I'm in some way

responsible. Well, at least I've provoked their imaginations.

Anyway, it was too late to think about it now. I shouldn't have consented to do it—damn it, I didn't feel like it now . . . but what the hell, one more time for the crowd wouldn't hurt.

I started to shiver a little bit and work my mouth up and down. I glanced around the counter, trying to hear what people were saying, but no one spoke loud enough. A middle-aged woman who sat on the stool to my left was blinking her eyes and sitting stiffly like a proper old matron does when, for instance, a drunkard is bothering her. She was afraid to move and wouldn't leave for fear of offending me.

The two stools to my right were vacant. The bus driver sitting three stools down on the right, had taken his hat and some papers from the stool next to him when I sat down. He looked sorry he had done it. I thought that was strange for such a big guy. I mean, he was really hard-looking. But I guess he sees all kinds in his job. Maybe that has something to do with it. Most of the people, in fact, were taken in. But that damn salesman kept eyeing me through his cloud of cigarette smoke. I noticed the heat again, and was getting a little nervous. I wondered if the salesman knew, but then thought; how could he—for sure? Anyway, he made me feel phony and I tried harder.

One of the women patrons, an apricot-faced old hag in a pale

lavender dress, was moved near tears when I, still waiting for my coffee, hobbled to the juke box and played a song. It was a sad song, an old Negro blues recording, slow and full of moaning. And I sat again, staring into emptiness, twitching nervously, and lost in my song. I was really playing it up. I wondered if the hag was crying now, but I couldn't bring myself to look again.

"Geez, poor bastard," whispered the bus driver to the waitress. she nodded and heaved a well—that's-the-way-life-goes sigh. And everyone, or almost everyone, continued gaping, no doubt transfixed by the little tragedy that had come their way. I could tell they were convinced; just looking around at their faces, I could tell. The fools. You're all suckers, I thought. I could imagine what they were thinking. They probably wanted to protect or shelter me, or help me in some way. They were probably thinking all the impossibly noble thoughts people think when tragedy is only temporary and doesn't concern them anyway. Just like crying at the movies. Or maybe they were thinking: thank you, God, for sparing me his fate. It didn't matter really. I could tell they were convinced.

Then, just as I was beginning to feel my part and slip into character, the idiots started up again—except this time they weren't laughing *with me*, they were laughing *at a spastic*. It wasn't that they were convinced, it was

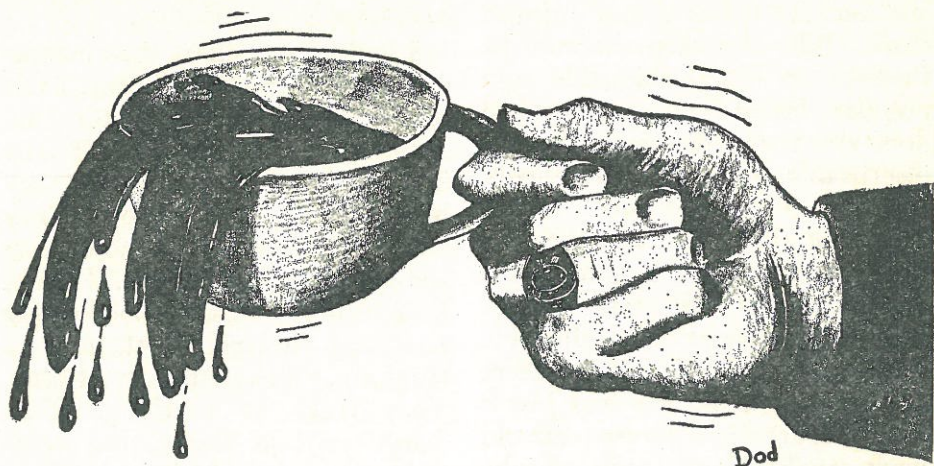
just that Billy Parker had to get into the act. I didn't have to look. I knew it was him. I felt like turning around and saying: "Yes, Bobby would approve, now shut the hell up." But I didn't. I couldn't have. What scared me now was this: I felt like the time in the parking lot—like I really was some hapless victim of chance. I guess I *was* pretty drunk. But still, I recognized the constricted hysterics, the usual senseless remarks: "Pssst, Pssst, hey man, look at the spastic. Man, could he use a tranquilizer." Then laughter. "Why don't you dance with the freak, Susie, I bet he can really shake it up." And more of the choked laughter. They just had to get in the act, had to expose everything. It was almost like last year at Winthrop's junior prom. I was a little drunk, from a dinner party, when I arrived at the prom and was asking the band leader if I could sit in on the drums (I had never played them before). He said something about a musicians' union, but when I persisted he sort of laughed to himself and said okay. So Billy, of course, had to get in the act and went around with his idiot lieutenant, Tom-Tom, telling everyone I was drunk and playing the drums. Because, he said, he thought it was so damn funny. Forgetting, of course, that half the faculty were drifting around the ballroom. Billy's a nice guy in a conversation with one or two people, and he's intelligent and all, but in a crowd he can be a real ass.

Now I sensed trouble. A few of the customers had turned their attention to the booth behind me, their unfortunate friend. And in undisguised mute anger, they watched the malicious antics of the laughing, small group of boys and girls. They looked disgusted and I could almost read their thoughts: they're old enough to know better. Yet there they are, perverted, mimicking the poor thing, whispering names—cruel names. And laughing, their faces flushed red in mocking laughter. Disgusting.

The bus driver really looked mad. I was beginning to worry. Something could really start up, I thought. Maybe I'd better leave. The heat was starting to kill me and I was perspiring. I guess I was really nervous. And I was also getting damn angry with everyone, especially that damn idiot Billy Parker. Why can't he and the other idiots shut up and just watch me? It was their stupid ass idea. I could hear Gail saying, "Well, I think he's so . . ." something or other, and then she started laughing again. That damned idiot. And the idiot customers. What the hell, mind your own business, you fools. Idiot old weepy bag, idiot bus driver, and you, you stiff old wretch sitting next to me, I'm not gonna bite you.

The bourbon was really getting to me.

"Here's your coffee, sir," said the waitress softly, setting down the cup and a napkin. "Will there



be anything else, sir?" Thanks for the quick service, I felt like saying.

Well, on with the act. God, I felt lousy. Again I paused before answering, pretending to strain my vocal chords, trying to force the words. After emitting a low, guttural sound, I replied:

"Naaaa, na, thang you."

Just as I said it, I saw two eyes staring at me through a cloud of smoke. The salesman. He shook his head towards me as if to say, "You're sickening," then paid his check and left. You're sickening too, I thought, and almost laughed. It was the bottle talking. It was a childish thought. And he was right. His look scared me. I started thinking all these idiot things like: is he going for the police, there might be a law against this kind of thing, and besides how the hell did he know, oh God,

maybe his kid is one or something? Yeah, maybe his kid is one. When I thought that, the fear left and I just felt rotten. It *was* sickening. I know it sounds like the old childish refrain, "How would you like it if it happened to you?" but I didn't give a damn. It was true.

Then the idiots started again, but at least it wasn't Billy this time, although he went along with it. It was Tom-Tom D'Arcy, Billy's right hand man, and somewhere in his shallow brain—if he has one—he had come up with the idea of mimicking me. "Na, na, naaaa," he said. Very good, Idiot. Maybe Billy will pat you on the head. You see, when Tom-Tom did it, it wasn't funny, even though they all laughed. (They laugh at anything.) It wasn't even sickening. It was just sad.

Because Tom-Tom didn't know why he was doing it. I did these things because people asked me to and because at one time I enjoyed them. Billy did them because he thought it was fashionable and popular, because my brother had done them, and because, for some inscrutable reason, he practically worshipped my brother. Tom-Tom didn't know why he did them; no one asked him to and it didn't matter one way or the other to him—not much did. He was a vegetable. He just sat there and he did them. He was just a totally apathetic eighteen year old short, stocky blond crew-cut who just seemed to be wherever everyone else was and who did what everyone else did. More specifically, he followed Billy around all the time, doing whatever Billy did, whether asked to or not. He was a sad imitation.

"Na, na, naaaa," he said again. I felt sick.

I sipped the coffee, but it made me feel worse, so I just sat there holding the cup. The humidity was making me miserable. If I couldn't get outside soon, I thought, I was going to faint. Then my head began to swim with thoughts: maybe the salesman's kid is one—and that blinking bitch next to me, go away—my head was killing me—fresh air—and what if these idiot customers find out I'm a fake—but what the hell, on with the act—and I wished that idiot Gail would stop laughing. I wished they all would—God, that's all they know

how to do: laugh—and I wondered what, just exactly what, in the hell I was trying to prove . . . just what?

I looked around at the customers. Don't feel sorry for me, I felt like saying, I feel sorry for you. And then I thought, what if they knew it was an act? Would they be laughing too? Probably. They were probably just as idiotic as the group in back of me. I could hear Witch Herschel oooooohing now and the rest of them were laughing. What a bunch of asses. They laugh at anything. That damn bourbon. Everything seemed insane now. Maybe everything is just one big laugh, I don't know. Maybe they're all really Tom-Toms, I thought; maybe they just don't feel anything. I mean, a normal person, at least for a minute, would stop and ask himself what this was all about.

I guess I was really making myself miserable. If I hadn't started thinking all those thoughts, the humidity probably wouldn't have bothered me. But I couldn't stop. I knew I had had too much to drink . . . yeah, that was it. The bourbon. That's what had started all these damn thoughts. I was almost dizzy. The bourdon, the heat, the damn thoughts: they all caused it. But I wanted to know, was that guy's kid one? Was all this sickening? Or was it all just one big laugh? Sure it was, I thought. What was I trying to prove anyway? It's for laughs, for the crowd, just like always . . . be reasonable, nobody's getting

hurt . . . just laughs . . . it's no big thing, nobody's—

"Na, na, naaaa."

"Go—goddamn you idiot," it came out. I turned around, but forgetting my hand, dropped the cup. Hot coffee splashed on the counter, on my shirt, on my pants. Obeying my first impulse to step back and wipe the liquid from my pants, I slipped backward, fell, and felt the pain of a knee stopping my head. All was confusion.

"Damn it. Watch what you're doing, you stupid freak," I heard, and looking up saw it was Billy. He still thought it was an act. And he just had to get in. So he kicked me, not hard, but deliberately in the back. Again the laughter.

Then I started to groan. The kick didn't hurt, but I groaned any way. It was part of the act again, for some reason I couldn't let the idiots know what I was

thinking. They'd think I was an ass. So I groaned. "Uhhh, oooh."

"Aw-right," shouted the burly bus driver, getting up from his stool three places down. "That's just about enough. I been watching you kids all night an' you make me sick. You had your fun, now leave the guy alone." Sir Launcelot in a brown leather jacket. Now what was I supposed to do? Well, I really didn't give a damn; I just hoped one of the crowd wouldn't say something intelligent like: "Don't get aroused, buddy, it's only an act." That would have done it.

The idiots were still laughing, softly though. They knew when to leave well enough alone. And they did. I think I was sort of surprised. Reluctantly, they paid their checks and walked out, Billy and Tom-Tom walking defiantly in defeat, the girls walking heads down, like they were ashamed.



But I doubt if they were, they didn't have the brains to know why they should be. Anyway, the sport was over.

Inside, everything returned to normal. The bus driver asked me about ten times: "You okay, Pal? You okay?" After I convinced him that Pal was okay, I brushed myself off and quietly finished a cup of coffee the waitress offered me free of charge.

It *was* sickening.

I had to get out, get out into the fresh air. I didn't look, but I could feel the stares as I struggled to the cash register, feel the intense eyes as I fumbled pathetically for a dime. I didn't even look back to see their faces as I limped out of the door, out of their idiot lives. They must have sat for a long time, talking about me. They probably didn't have anything else to talk about.

The fresh air felt great. At first, it made me dizzy, but after a minute I just felt sort of calm and numb. And relieved, I guess.

For a minute, I thought about that blinking woman sitting next to me back in the DHE. I thought what a tidy, well-ordered and secure life she must lead (or follow). And especially how unreal her life must be. I mean, even when I fell, and even when the bus driver was helping me and all, she just sat there like it was all very distasteful. No, that's not it. She was trying to pretend that nothing was happening. I guess it would always seem like a "dreadful experience" to her, or, more

specifically, that the DHE was a "dreadful place." I hated her for a minute. I got this screwy idea that I wanted to take her by the feet and drag her, face down, through a field of mud. Just so she'd see that dirt does exist — that there really is dirt. But she wouldn't open her eyes and see that the dirt really wasn't bad. She wouldn't understand what the dirt really was—that, in fact, she was . . . well, it was a screwy thought. Then I pictured her getting up with mud smeared all over her face. I wanted to laugh, but I couldn't. I was too weak and tired and drunk. And after a minute, it didn't seem funny anyway.

As I rounded the corner of the dark street, I saw the idiots, grouped together by Tom-Tom's car, talking and giggling quietly. Billy was doing an imitation of me and Tom-Tom stood next to him, looking up at him in quiet admiration. He looked like a pet. Susie was hacking away at her damn gum, and Gail and Witch Herschel were giggling and ooohing together. As I approached them the laughter began again, louder though, much louder. But I didn't speak to them. I didn't even smile.

When I got to the car, Billy, stifling his laughter, took a deep breath and sighed gleefully.

"Really great, Ger, no kidding, what an act." He meant that I was just like Bobby, or rather, Rob. Yeah, that was the way Rob would have done it. But he didn't

say it. He was, after all, intelligent.

"It was really great," said Tom-Tom.

I didn't say anything. I just got in the back seat of the car. All I wanted to do was go home and sleep it off.

When the rest of them got in, Billy, still laughing, asked: "What's wrong, Ger, too much

of the old booze?" He laughed again.

"The old booze kinda got you down, huh?"

I didn't answer.

Then Gail spoke up: "You really were funny, Gerry. I thought—"

"Shut up, you idiot bitch."

For some reason, they thought that was funny. They all laughed.

Summit Conference—an opportunity for the leader of the Communist Bloc to speak in another country.

Robert Blackwood

"... or death!"—A commonly heard expression that can follow almost any word.

Robert Blackwood

BEGUILED

A treasure is something that
is siezed with surety,
or so I once thought;
now being confused and lost of light,
my staff, I discover, is
warped with deceit.
Knowledge devoured truth and spat out
a venom of hypocrisy.
(I dwell within a ghetto,
Completely ignorant of the man outside.)
Oh, so perfect we visualize
our contact with man,
that we emphatically profess
equal rights,
but our ghettos have twisted
this perception
into a senseless iniquity.
Let's rise out of this filthy tomb,
and see this other man.
His desires are amongst ours.
His ways are our ways.

Edward M. Williams

Herb Brown

Friends say Herb Brown could be
counted among the best of men.
He wasn't rich or famous,
nor was he brilliant, but then,
such things meant little to him.
He was a model citizen.
Herb Brown loved his family.
A good provider, friends say.
And though his work would tire him,
he trudged home every day
to kiss his wife and cheer his kids.
He was considerate in every way.
And he was a respected man.
Friends say, in the community,
Herb Brown was always active
and took responsibility.
He always paid his bills on time
and gave his share to charity.
Herbert Brown, age fifty-four—
A regular guy, friends declared—
died at home, said column two,
in peace, may his soul be spared.
A week or two passed by and then
friends forgot. And no one cared.

John McEvelley Jr.

Death

Bobby, you can't
touch Daddy because he's . . .
Rainy gray and crying and
"You have my deepest . . ."
Since the six pall bearers
smelled ether-like
and of chrysanthemums
and lit candles.
The last touch of his cold hand,
like his last rasping, grating breath
like the last beat of his pulse
like the last shovel of dirt
like the last . . .
Life!

—James Snyder

Brain Waves and

by

Lawrence

Beuret

How many times have you met a person whom, for no apparent reason, you instinctively disliked? A scientist in Bristol, England, believes he has found a clue to this reaction between certain people. In the course of his research he has discovered a basic correlation between a person's brain waves and his personality.

The existence of brain waves was first recognized in 1928 by Dr. Hans Berger, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Jena in Germany. Using a crude vacuum tube amplifier, Dr. Berger was able to magnify more than a million times the feeble electric currents produced by the cells of the brain during their activity. His first paper, published in 1929, received unfavorable recognition. An explanation of brain function in terms of currents and voltages was certainly undramatic compared to the currently popular theories of Freudian psychiatry. Not until 1934, when a group of physiologists demonstrated the work of Berger at a meeting of the Physiological Society of Cam-

bridge, did he gain general recognition.

As brain wave recordings (electroencephalograms or EEG) began to be improved, scientists noticed that there was a basic pattern in the brain waves of most persons. The usual EEG consisted of a series of waves oscillating at the rate of about ten times per second. These waves were present in most cases only when the subject was at rest with his eyes closed and not attentive to focusing his attention on anything in particular. When the subject was alert and concentrating on something, however, the waves disappeared and the EEG became a line of flattened, irregular ripples. Since these waves were the first definite rhythms from the brain to be identified, they were called alpha rhythms.

With increased research, it soon became apparent that the alpha rhythms were not produced under the same conditions by each brain. In some cases the alpha rhythms persisted in the EEG even when the subject had his eyes open and was concentrating. In others, there was no evidence of alpha rhythms in the EEG even when the subject was at rest. Then, in 1943, Dr. W. Grey Walter of the Burden Neurological Institute in Bristol discovered that basic personality patterns accompanied the

Personality Patterns

various types of alpha wave production. These fall into three groups. Individuals with persistent (P) alpha rhythms tend to employ auditory, kinaesthetic or tactile perceptions in their thinking rather than visual imagery. In these persons the alpha rhythms are not blocked even when the person has his eyes open and is concentrating on some problem. A second group, minus (M) alpha rhythms, is made up of those people whose thinking processes are carried out entirely in terms of visual imagery. In this group there is no trace of alpha waves even when the person has his eyes closed and his mind idle. The third group, the responsive (R) group, consists of those persons whose alpha rhythms appear with the eyes closed and disappear when the eyes are opened and the mind is active. These persons employ both visual and non-visual elements in their thinking processes.

Extensive surveys made to determine the population distribution of these three types of alpha rhythms found that the P and M rhythms each extend to about 15% of the population. The R group constitutes the remaining 70% of the population. In addition, it has been found that the M alpha rhythms are more predominant among scientists, while the P rhythms occur to a greater ex-

tent among artists. The R group, since they employ the thought processes of both the M and P groups, tend to be most efficient at correlating the information provided by the sense organs.

As might be expected from the extreme variations in personality between the M and P groups, serious consequences may result when persons of these two opposite groups meet. In a series of studies it has been shown that persons having the extreme characteristics of these groups often have an instinctive aversion to each other the first time they meet. Their arguments are usually violent and rarely end in any mutual settlement. The fact that these persons have irreconcilable approaches to a subject, aside from any additional incompatibilities, suggests that knowledge of a person's alpha pattern might be helpful in situations where mutual compatibility is essential, such as in diplomatic circles or matching of marriage partners. This does not mean that brain waves can be blamed for all unpleasant encounters, since many personality differences are based on more familiar reasons. They can, however, provide clues to some of the personality differences which have no rational basis.

Presently available experimental and statistical evidence seems

to indicate that alpha rhythm patterns are inborn and are probably hereditary to a great extent. The dissimilarity of distribution of these patterns, on the other hand, indicates that they are complicated by individual experiences and environmental influences. In identical twins the early alpha patterns are the same, and the waves appearing during times of non-activity remain essentially similar throughout life. In response to stimulation, however, variations in the alpha rhythms rapidly develop, presumably as a direct result of different influences. By an analysis of the alpha rhythms, then, it is possible to detect slight variations in the personalities of these twins, which

might possibly go unnoticed by all except their most intimate acquaintances.

There is still much to be learned about these three brain wave groups. The origin and time of differentiation of the various patterns is still undetermined. The general rarity of the M alpha waves among children suggests, however, that imaginative thinking appears at about the age when the alpha rhythms begin, and that visual thinking is developed later as a result of environmental influences. As yet it has not been possible to follow the development of a large enough portion of the population to determine at what point these differences are developed.

Many People

Many people like jelly,
And they have a round belly.
Many people like jam,
But I don't really give a damn!
Many people like caviar,
And I say "have a jar."
Many people like Muscatelle,
Which has a pretty smell.
Many people like lime—
It only costs a dime.
Many people like cherry,
And sing "Hi, derry, derry!"
Many people who write verse
Deserve a damning curse!

Robert McHugh